



KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN INDIAN-ADMINISTERED KASHMIR

January 1, 2024 - January 31, 2024

SUMMARY

In January 2024, Indian authorities continued to commit grave human rights violations in Indian-administered Kashmir (IAK). Indian forces killed at least one individual and continued their ongoing campaigns of mass arbitrary detention and property expropriation. Indian authorities continued to target any form of dissent, including through arresting or criminally pursuing at least five people (including at least one minor) for social media posts. Indian authorities continued to escalate forced demographic change in the region, including through the expansion of militarized settlements for the families of dead Indian armed forces personnel.

Numerous Kashmiri journalists, human rights defenders, political activists, and dissenters continue to be arbitrarily detained. In a case emblematic of Indian repression targeting Kashmiri human rights defenders, Khurram Parvez has been illegally imprisoned in a maximum-security facility in New Delhi for over 2 years (815 days). In a case emblematic of the repression targeting Kashmiri journalists, Aasif Sultan has been illegally imprisoned for almost five and half years (1,998 days).

Due to ongoing repression by Indian authorities, key developments in the human rights situation in IAK have likely gone unreported.

Note: Indian officials often label pro-self-determination or pro-human rights activity as “terrorism” in IAK. Indian authorities also often label any victim of state violence or violations (and not just armed resistance fighters) as a “terrorist” or “militant” and any dissenter in IAK as a “terrorist,” “secessionist,” or “militant.” If a violation occurs near the Line of Control (LOC), the victim is typically labeled a “foreign terrorist,” “intruder,” or “infiltrator.” If the victim is not affiliated with any organized dissent, they are often labeled an “overground worker” (or “OGW”), “hybrid militant,” “hybrid terrorist,” or “militant associate.” If the individual is a journalist, scholar, or human rights defender, they are often labeled a “narrative terrorist” or “white collar terrorist.” These unsubstantiated, demonizing and dehumanizing labels are used to legitimate violations against civilians, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, raids, and the forcible taking of property.

KILLINGS AND EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE

Indian forces continued to extrajudicially kill a number of individuals

On January 5, 2024, Indian [armed forces killed](#) Bilal Ahmed Bhat, a resident of Chek Cholan of Shopian district, in Chotigam, Shopian and labeled that he was a “terrorist”.

VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Jammu and Kashmir Police escalated repression targeting social media expression

On January 23, 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir Police [arrested a minor](#) in Chatroo, Kishtwar district for a social media post labeled “derogatory.”

On January 24, 2024, Jammu and Kashmir Police [arrested several individuals](#) in Rajouri and Reasi districts for allegedly posting social media content labeled “objectionable” related to the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, India.

On January 26, 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir Police [arrested](#) Zafar Hussain of Khanna Chargal, Jammu district and criminally pursued an unnamed female college student for allegedly posting comments on social media expressing discontent over the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, India.

ARBITRARY DETENTIONS AND RAIDS

Indian authorities continued to arrest, arbitrarily detain and raid people in IAK

On January 3, 2024, the Indian [authorities arrested](#) Saif-ud-din of Jammu and Farooq Ahmad Jungal of Uri, Baramulla district for funding “terrorism.”

On January 4, 2024, the Indian authorities [arrested](#) seven individuals, Romain Rasool Sheikh, Irfan Nazir Sheikh, Rizwan Nazir Sheikh, Sahil Javid Sheikh, Jahangir Bashir Mir, Tariq Ashraf Sheikh, and Shakir Lateef Pathan, all residents of Beerwah, Budgam district and labeled them “terrorist associates.”

On January 4, 2024, the Indian authorities [arrested](#) Javed Ahmed Mattoo of the Sopore, Baramullah district in New Delhi and labeled him a “terrorist.”

On January 24, 2024, the State Investigation Agency (SIA) [arrested eight](#) individuals (including three juveniles): Farooq Wani and Shameem Ahmad Bhat of Heff-Shirmal, Shopian, Nassir Farooq Shah of Wanteng Mohalla, Bijbehara, Aamir Hussain Wani of Ashajipora, Anantnag, Towseef Ahmad Pandith of Jablipora Bijbehara, Anantnag, Sajjad Ahmad Bhat of Goriwan, Bijbehara, Sarjeel Ahmad Bhat of Reshipora Qaimoh, Kulgam, Danish Ahmad Thokar of Chakoora, Shopian, Ubaid Ahmad Paddar of Chakoora, Shopian, and Sahil Bashir Dar of Dhobi-Gath Bijbehara, Anantnag for allegedly “fueling communal disharmony” and “sustaining militancy.”

On January 22, 2024, India’s National Investigation Agency (NIA) [arrested](#) a juvenile in Rajouri district for “harboring terrorists.”

On January 24, 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir Police [arrested](#) Bashir Ahmad of Bathindi, Jammu and labeled him an “over ground worker.”

In connection with the December 22, 2023 detentions, torture and killings reported in our [December 2023 update](#), Indian armed forces [abducted and tortured five more youths](#) from Topa Pir, Poonch district named Riaz, Farooq, Israel, Jameel, and Irfan. Like most people in IAK, the people of area have no hope of [justice](#).

On January 27, 2024, Indian armed forces [arrested five](#), Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, Khursheed Ahmad Rather, Mudassir Shafiq, Ghulam Sarwar Rather, and Qazi Fazal Illahi, all residents of Karnah, Kupwara district and labeled them “terrorist associates.”

On January 28, 2024, Rajasthan Police [arrested Sohrab Qayoom](#), a Kashmiri student, for allegedly making remarks about the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, India.

On January 29, 2024, Jammu and Kashmir Police [arbitrarily detained two individuals](#), Fayaz Ahmad Kumar of Khanpora, Baramulla and Safeer Ahmad Bhat of Janbazpora, Baramulla, in Kot-Bhalwal Jail, Jammu for allegedly “not mending their anti-national activities.”

Sajad Gul remains in prison despite being released from court

[Journalist Sajad Gul](#) continues to be arbitrarily detained despite a court ordering his release on November 19, 2023. Repression targeting journalists continues to force Kashmiri journalists to [quit journalism](#).

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DISEMPOWERMENT, AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Colonies for families of dead Indian armed forces personnel announced

On January 14, 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir administration [announced](#) that land in IAK would be allocated for the construction of “Sainik Colonies” for the families of Indian armed forces personnel killed in IAK.

Inquiry into Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry initiated

On January 22, 2024, the Indian government [ordered an inquiry](#) into the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI), the leading business association in IAK.

STATE SURVEILLANCE

Jammu and Kashmir Police undertakes new census

On January 26, 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir Police [distributed forms to households across Kashmir](#) requiring information including the names, gender, age, profession, relationships and identification information of household members together with information on assets, history of foreign visits, the installation of CCTV cameras and whether they have relatives abroad. This new police “census” is [illegal](#).

VIOLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Jammu and Kashmir administration advanced plans for the regulation of Islamic education in IAK

On January 3, 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir administration took a “decisive step” to establish a [Madrassa Board](#) which will regulate Islamic schools throughout IAK.

Jammu and Kashmir administration renames 33 institutions and roads

On January 30, 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir administration [renamed thirty-three educational](#) institutions and roads in IAK to honor India state “martyrs.”

TAKING AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

Indian authorities continued to expropriate property on purported links to “terrorism”

On January 1, 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir Police [declared 23 people from Kishtwar](#) “proclaimed offenders” under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and moved to expropriate their immovable property.

On January 3, 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir Police [expropriated the land](#) of Lateef Ahmad Kambay of Wakoora, Ganderbal (who is arbitrarily detained) under the UAPA.

On January 4, 2024, the SIA [expropriated the land](#) of Abdul Rashid Mir of Amargrah, Sopore, Baramulla district.

On January 6, 2024, the NIA [expropriated the property](#) of Aamir Mushtaq Ganie of Kiran Colony, Chanapore, Srinagar for alleged links to “terrorist groups.”

On January 11, 2024, Indian authorities [expropriated](#) the assets and froze the bank accounts of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat and Muslim League Jammu Kashmir, pro-self-determination parties banned in [December 2023](#). Indian authorities also [expropriated](#) the properties of pro-self-determination Hurriyat Conference members.

VIOLATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

Riverbed mining continued to cause grave environmental damage in IAK

Riverbed mining in Kashmir's rivers, particularly the Jhelum, has caused [extensive damage](#) to homes, farmlands, and orchards and has led to changes in river morphology, erosion of riverbanks, severe pollution, flash floods, water scarcity and increased food security in IAK.

IMPUNITY AND LACK OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE

India’s National Human Rights Commission mandated to hear human rights grievances in IAK

India’s [discredited](#) National Human Rights Commission has been tasked [to hear human rights complaints](#) in IAK. Indian authorities abolished the State Human Rights Commission in 2019, terminating some 17,000 established cases of grave human rights violations. Due to extensive, grave reprisals, victims in IAK have avoided reporting violations.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND REPORTS

Haris Zargar and Goldie Osuri published “[The Distinct Disposessions of Indian Settler Colonialism in Kashmir: Land, Narrative and Indigeneity](#)” in the peer-reviewed journal *Development and Change*, arguing that the situation in IAK is one of settler colonialism similar to Palestine and East Turkestan.

Emma Brännlund and others published “[In/secure Childhoods: Children and Conflict in Kashmir](#)” in the peer-reviewed journal *Childhood*, analyzing the artwork of children in IAK through feminist security studies lens.

Nayeem Rather and Saranga Ugalmugle published “[Justice Kaul Calls for TRC In Kashmir, But Look At The Fate Of Those Whose Work Can Enable It](#)” in the independent online law-related media platform *The Leaflet*, arguing that detention of Kashmiri human rights defenders like Irfan Mehraj and Khurram Parvez belies the Indian state’s interest in truth-telling and reconciliation in IAK.

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Published February 15, 2024